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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4461
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6030
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9769
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5941
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0738
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR ECON KPAO KMDR KS US
SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

East Asia and Pacific: DPRK

"CHINA CAN ONLY GAIN FROM BEING TOUGH ON N. KOREA"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (05/27): "There is a limit to getting North Korea to give up its nuclear program by relying on the power of the U.S. alone. If the military option is taken off the table, then the options in terms of punishment and pressure are limited. This makes China's role all the more important, since China is the North's largest trading partner and food and energy provider. Unless China participates proactively, any international sanctions against North Korea will not be successful, nor will any UN Security Council resolution (on North Korea) be meaningful. ... Beijing will not be able to ignore the fact that Japan, which has been wary of China's growing military might, has used North Korea's provocation as an excuse to bolster its own military power. Deterring North Korea from triggering an anachronistic arms race will also serve China's security interests."

"STANDING UP TO PROVOCATION"

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (05/27): "North Korea has gone beyond the international community's tolerance and patience. Its provocative actions are threatening peace and the global order. It is high time the international community taught the North a lesson. ... Much of the work of persuading the North will fall to China to exert its influence over its long-time communist partner."

" 'POST-PSI PARTICIPATION' SITUATION IS MORE IMPORTANT"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (05/27): "The prevailing analysis is that North Korea is citing Washington and Seoul's hostile policies as its excuse (for the latest provocations) but that the North is taking such hard-line steps in order to shore up its regime and achieve a 'powerful and prosperous nation.' This move by the North will not change as long as the crisis of the regime, such as leader Kim Jong-il's ill health, continues. Therefore, this is not the time to engage in a lengthy dispute over the ROK's PSI participation, but instead it is time to respond resolutely to North Korea's exaggerated protests and threats, while keeping tensions from escalating into a crisis."

"FULL PARTICIPATION IN PSI AND WORSENING INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (05/27): "It is appropriate to hold North Korea accountable for conducting a second nuclear test following its long-range rocket launch. ... However, the most critical thing to do now is to find a solution. North Korea's second nuclear test indicates that it is moving closer to becoming a fully-fledged nuclear-armed state. North Korea's rise as a nuclear state will create a tense situation, threatening regional security and peace. Historically, North Korea's nuclear capabilities have grown stronger during times of pressure and sanctions and weaker during times of dialogue and negotiations. ... Even if one gets angry at North Korea's provocations, dialogue remains the most realistic option."

STEPHENS